TL 2003

PLA

WHOSE CASE FOR INTEGRATION?

A RESPONSE TO THOMAS MICHEL S.J.

"It is Indonesia who says that the People of East Timor have chosen integration, but the people themselves have never said that".
Bishop Belo, in a letter to the Secretary General of the UN (February 6, 1989)

"The cowardly occupier of our country is making propaganda, claiming we are only fifty... that we have only twenty guns and... only a hundred fugitives. We affirm that we are not many, but also that we are not just a few - we are an entire people at war".
Xanana Gusmão in a message to the UN General Assembly (October 14, 1982)

Estêvão Cabral

July 1995

In his article in **The Month,** May 1995, Thomas Michel sets out the case for the 'integration' of East Timor with Indonesia. The rubric which introduces the article states that the information that 'outsiders' have access to is one-sided and it reveals that the author will challenge the 'politically correct' view that Indonesia should withdraw from East Timor. In setting out his challenge Thomas Michel demonstrates in a number of ways that he has access to the view that is deemed politically correct by General Suharto and his military commanders in East Timor. In fact, a close analysis of his article reveals that his account is astonishingly one-sided. Familiar Indonesian propaganda ploys recur in his account and the article has an odd mix of distortions and attempts to rehearse different points of view so as to appear reasonable.

Many people I know who have read this piece, including people within the Catholic Church, have responded with anger or despair. They ask: "how could such distortions flow from the pen of a prominent Catholic?" But, after two decades of struggle against the illegal occupation of our country, we East Timorese are all too familiar with articles of this sort. The only appropriate response to distortions like this is to challenge them head on. The purpose of my article is therefore to set the record straight and to provide an all too elusive 'insider' account.

My account is organised into three main sections: I will first deal with the gross distortions of historical facts in the article, beginning with the events in East Timor following the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974. In the second section, I will then go on to argue that Thomas Michel's view of 'development' in East Timor since the Indonesian invasion in 1975 is not only misleading but profoundly naive. In the third and final section, I will look at the claims he makes about the role of the Catholic Church in East Timor, and, in particular, the way in which the words and actions of Bishop Belo are misrepresented.

LOADED LANGUAGE

Before I move on to specific distortions and weaknesses in Thomas Michel's arguments, I will make a couple of general points about his use of loaded language. First, his use of the term 'politically correct' is deliberately provocative. The term is all too often used as a stick to beat those who attempt to propose policies and forms of action which are designed to support or empower groups who have less political clout than others, such as minority ethnic groups or indigenous peoples. It is however quite extraordinary to see the term used in this article. It is not just a small groups of political lobbyists who call for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops from East Timor. It is the position that has been consistently adopted by the United Nations since General Assembly Resolution 3485 of December 12, 1975.

Secondly, I would like to comment on Michel's use of the term 'integration.'. In a footnote, he states categorically that he is using the term because he recognises Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. He claims that people use this term throughout Indonesia and in the region itself. He also says, in a matter of fact way, that people concerned with East Timorese affairs can be described as having 'pro-integration' or 'anti-integration' views. In fact, most people use the terms: "pro-integration and pro-independence". As an East Timorese who has been involved in the struggle for independence since 1975, I do not recognise the legitimacy of the presence of the occupying forces, I will therefore use the terms 'invasion' and 'occupation' throughout my paper.

A. HISTORICAL FACTS: DISTORTIONS AND OMISSIONS

In the second paragraph of his article, Thomas Michel makes a remarkable statement. He claims he wants to challenge the 'accepted wisdom', the 'politically correct position' on the East Timor question. He describes this position as follows: "Indonesia is the illegal invader of East Timor, the perpetrator of the genocide of the East Timorese people, and the main, if not sole obstacle to the establishment of an independent state desired by virtually all Timorese". He then goes on quite glibly to say: "Unfortunately, most of the assumptions on which the accepted wisdom is based are subject to debate, or at least to serious qualification". In one brief sentence, he dismisses two decades of careful historical documentation and political analysis of events in East Timor before and after the Indonesian invasion. I can only compare this callous and dismissive attitude with recent attempts to deny that the Holocaust took place.

Let me put things right here and draw attention to some glaring omissions in Thomas Michel's account of the events before and after the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. When the Carnation Revolution took place in Portugal in April 1974, the East Timorese were for the first time allowed to have political parties. Seizing this unique opportunity, three main political parties and two minor ones, were founded. The main ones were: the Democratic Union of Timor (UDT) which was founded on May 11, 1974; the ASDT/FRETILIN founded on May 20, 1974; and a third party, known as APODETI which attracted far fewer members than the first two parties. APODETI was founded on May 27, at the request of the Head of the Indonesian Consulate, Elias Tomodok, in Dili, the capital of East Timor. From the beginning, this party was no more than a branch of Golkar[1] beyond the Indonesian border. No mention at all is made of APODETI in Thomas Michel's version of this moment in East Timor's history. The two minor parties were Kota and Trabalhista.

From April 1974 onwards, the two main political parties in East Timor began planning their own policies and were campaigning with their own resources so as to gain as much support as possible among the people. FRETILIN always made it clear in its policy that it wanted total independence for East Timor. That meant being in charge of its own affairs and saying "no" to economic dependence with Portugal or any other country. In another words, the main concern was with defining a way of getting rid of the Portuguese without bloodshed while retaining a good diplomatic relationship with the former colonial power and with other countries in the world. This included neighbouring countries, so Indonesia was not excluded.

Meanwhile, APODETI policies were being masterminded by the Indonesian Intelligence under the code name 'Operasi Komodo' (Operation Giant Lizard)[2]. The Indonesian Intelligence personnel were operating on the ground in East Timor and were reporting back directly to policy-makers in Jakarta. The Jakarta regime provided financial and logistical support to APODETI by supplying goods, like radios, clothes, sugar and so on.

---

[1] Golkar is the party of the Indonesian dictator: Suharto. The reason why I call APODETI a branch of Golkar is because, the latter merely serves the interests of Suharto and his cronies'.

[2] Operasi Komodo was founded by Major-General Ali Mortopo in October 1974 to build up to a war in East Timor through covert propaganda. This meant de-stabilising the whole situation by creating conflict between the East Timorese political parties and to construct distorted images of the East Timorese people and their struggle back in Indonesia.

However, when they realised that their covert operation was failing, propaganda campaigns were launched with the aim of intimidating the East Timorese. The best-known campaigns were those which led to the creation of Radio Ramelau station in Western Timor and the distribution of pamphlets on the streets of Dili in 1975 prior to the invasion. The APODETI propaganda, backed by covert Indonesian operations, targeted FRETILIN in particular and consistently represented the members of this party as dangerous 'Communists' and anti-Catholic. In one bizarre episode, a dead snake was hung around the neck of a statue of Our Lady in the centre of Leci-Dere in Dili. After that Roque Rodrigues, a member of the Central Committee of FRETILIN, was accused of putting it there. This accusation was easily dismissed since the night that the snake was put up on the statue, Roque was not in Dili or anywhere near by. He had left for the interior two days beforehand for a week-long campaigning trip.

On Radio Ramelau at that time, we used to hear threats like: "We will take over East Timor in twenty four hours" and "We will get rid of the Communists". However, these Indonesian propaganda efforts were to little avail since only about 15-18% of the population had access to a radio. I will add here a note about the type of propaganda pamphlets that were distributed clandestinely during this period. There were, for example, pictures of a hammer and sickle along with a hand with long nails. Underneath was a caption which said, in Portuguese: "That's what FRETILIN looks like". The hand with the long nails was designed to conjure up the image of the Devil: yet another pathetic attempt to portray FRETILIN as anti-Catholic. The hammer and sickle showed the Indonesian preoccupation with portraying FRETILIN as 'Communists' rather than Nationalists. Through this propaganda ploy, the Indonesians were trying to exploit the small but powerful group of Catholics in East Timor to undermine the FRETILIN leadership. However, the hammer and sickle would have meant nothing to the vast majority of East Timorese since they knew nothing about Communism.

The two East Timorese political parties (UDT and FRETILIN) originally had no military wings. However, APODETI clearly had covert military support from the Indonesian army. The covert military operation in support of APODETI was in violation of international law. The agents involved in Operasi Komodo were trespassing the border of a foreign country. East Timor was still a Portuguese territory.

The creation of FALINTIL[3] by FRETILIN was inevitable in these circumstances; the party's interests and the pro-independence movement had to be defended. The Indonesian intruders were already in East Timor operating covertly. They tried everything to de-stabilise the whole situation by creating confusion and eventually persuaded the UDT leadership to plot a coup against FRETILIN. They also engaged in scare-mongering tactics, for example, spreading the rumour that China was to help FRETILIN. This rumour precipitated the coup attempt by UDT. When the coup came, FALINTIL was able to defeat UDT within weeks. However, their purpose was not to "overrun UDT" but to defend the country from the Indonesians who clearly wanted to take over East Timor.

UDT leaders found themselves serving Indonesian interests by going along with the Indonesian tricks and paving the way to an Indonesian invasion. UDT was defeated because

[3] Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste (The National Army for the Liberation of East Timor).

they did not manage to seize the whole stockpile of Portuguese weapons during the coup and because they had little military support.

There has never been "massive support from the Communist world for FRETILIN" as Thomas Michel claims in his article. This is the claim that was made at the time by the Indonesian government and its military to exacerbate the already volatile situation and as an pretext to invade. They still insist on this position today. Ironically, from 1974 until today, there are more goods and diplomatic missions from the Communist world in Indonesia than there have ever been in East Timor.

It is widely known in the international community and in the Catholic Church that there was no military support at all for FRETILIN from the Communist countries. However, we do not know the Indonesian military was widely supported by Western countries in 1975 and Western governments rushed to supply military equipment to invade East Timor as their paranoia about Communism mounted. Despite the assertions about Communist support for FRETILIN, Suharto's regime is still unable to produce any evidence after almost twenty years.

In his article, Thomas Michel also succeeds in misrepresenting the events surrounding the declaration of independence by FRETILIN. He says that:

> FRETILIN supporters insist that all five parties freely signed the declaration of independence... Timorese officials in the local government maintain that other parties were forced to sign the declaration of independence and that representatives of the other four parties invited Indonesia to step in and put an end to the chaos.

This is just another sign of how he has been duped by those who supplied information to him. I joined FRETILIN in 1974 and I have been a member of this party since then and I have never heard of pressures of this kind being imposed. This is purely an Indonesian fabrication. What FRETILIN insisted on from 1974-1983 was that it was: "the only legitimate representative of the Maubere people". It did not recognise the existence of APODETI or the two much smaller groups: KOTA and Trabalhista. So, FRETILIN was, in effect, the only party which declared Unilateral Independence on November 28, 1975. Perhaps Thomas Michel should recall that, by then, the leaders of all other four parties were already licking their wounds in Indonesian territory and waiting to sign the document prepared by the Indonesian Secret Service.

FRETILIN did not need their signatures. Thomas Michel was trying to distort the facts at this point in his article. It is only the Indonesian government that has been arguing at international meetings where and when the question of East Timor comes up that "integration was requested by four main political parties: UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista". It is the Indonesian government that has claimed at the United Nations that "the vast majority of East Timorese" wanted integration. They have also claimed that this declaration was made in Balibó, near the border with West Timor and was signed by UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista.

This declaration was in fact secretly prepared by the Indonesian Intelligence Service in a Hotel in Bali. They then obliged the leadership of UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista to sign

at gun point. This so-called Balibó Declaration, was coined the "*Balibohong Declaration*" (the Indonesian words for Bali lie declaration) by Xanana Gusmão, the leader of the East Timorese. Soon after the signature made at gun point, the UDT representative in Portugal, Dr Moisés do Amaral, denounced it and said that the document was invalid. Therefore, the claim passed on to Thomas Michel by 'local government officials' in Dili that FRETILIN had terrorised opposition parties to sign the independence declaration is totally unfounded. FRETILIN did not need such signatures because the party enjoyed mass support among the Maubere people.

The war against the invading force is a legitimate one. It is quite legitimate for FALINTIL to fight foreign forces that are intruding on East Timorese soil. The Indonesians fought the Dutch when they ruled Indonesia, the Vietnamese fought the French and the USA and the Americans themselves fought Great Britain before they got their independence. There is no reason for FALINTIL to surrender or to stop fighting. They have shown their determination to fight for the East Timorese cause: defending the land and its people. Only people lacking in humanity can negate the numbers of people dead, arrested, and tortured.

Regarding the number of FALINTIL members cited in Michel's article, this point also deserves some comment here. After the invasion on December 7, 1975, the Indonesian commanders claimed that there were only about 500 people up in the mountains and that the whole population was under their control. In reality they controlled only one third of the territory. Contrary to all expectations, including of those of the Indonesian authorities, it was only in late 1978 that the mass of the population was brought under Indonesian control and then only after intensive bombardment from sea, land and air. I was one of those captured in March 1979 and I was very lucky to have survived after spending three months in prison without trial and another two months under house arrest. Thousands of people who had survived the ferocious bombardments, later lost their lives through famine, disease, malnutrition. Though Thomas Michel tries to deny this, up to 200,000 people are known to have died during the invasion and in its aftermath, approximately one third of the population of East Timor in 1975. Contrary to what Michel claim, these figures are not exaggerated. This are carefully documented historical facts.

I would also like to respond to Michel's comment about the capture of Xanana Kairala Gusmão, the leader of the Resistance inside East Timor. His capture was without doubt a great setback for our struggle. The Indonesian troops gleefully announced their 'success' in capturing the most wanted man in East Timor. But it also turned out to be a setback for them too as Xanana's arrest was widely publicised at the international level and this was the last thing that the Indonesian authorities wanted. They probably expected that, after Xanana's capture, the world would applaud them for their 'bravery'. As it turned out, many Heads of State and prominent people expressed concern. The concern was so great that the Indonesians had to put him 'on trial'. The 'trial' was a farce. He was tried in a language he does not understand. Xanana refused to recognise the legitimacy of the Indonesian presence in East Timor and hence the jurisdiction of the court saying they had no right to put him on trial.

Regarding the numbers of people involved in the Resistance, the Indonesians must have been pleased to see Thomas Michel reproducing their statistics. I would however like to point out that the Indonesian statistics are highly unreliable. I would like to remind him of some of the statistics given out by the Indonesian commanders on the ground over the years. In 1983, the

Indonesian Commander in East Timor, in an interview with a Portuguese Television crew, claimed there were only about 50 FALINTIL guerrillas still in the mountains and that they were just waiting to surrender. By 1988, his successor was claiming that there were up to 2000. He said that they were surviving in very difficult conditions and again used the favourite Indonesian words "they were just waiting to surrender". By 1990, the new Commander was estimating that there were less than 1000 FALINTIL members and the numbers were declining. However, when they captured Xanana on November 20, 1992, they contradicted themselves again when they claimed that thousands of FALINTIL members had surrendered. Our sources confirmed that less than 10 people actually surrendered in December 1992. One of them was exposed to the media and two others were mentioned. As I am writing this paper, Colonel Mahidin Simbolon, the present commander in East Timor, has just told Reuters that "200 FRETILIN guerrillas are still roaming the forest of East Timor, arming with 106 guns and some grenade". It seems that he knows the exact figure as his predecessors but are unable to capture them by employing tens of thousands of Indonesian soldiers over the years.

MICHEL'S CLAIMS ABOUT 'DEVELOPMENT' IN EAST TIMOR SINCE 1975

I turn now to Thomas Michel's rather naive claims about the 'development' programmes in East Timor. If there is anyone to blame for the lack of development up to 1975, it is the Portuguese government which ruled East Timor for over four centuries and built up very little infra-structure. It is also my duty to remind Thomas Michel that during the very short period of time when FRETILIN was in control of the territory before the Indonesian invasion and occupation, FRETILIN was planning a programme of development which would have been put in place had we become a sovereign nation. Education, health and economic development were all high on the FRETILIN agenda.

Regarding Michel's point about the division of the administration, the Indonesian government must think that they had discovered wilderness. The 13 districts, sub-districts and villages described by Michel have always been there. They were created by the Portuguese many years ago. There are, however two main differences now. Firstly, the population have been removed from their ancestral villages and moved to the strategic hamlets created by the Indonesian troops after the invasion. Secondly, the Portuguese and Tetum terms for administrative units, namely "*Concelhos, Postos*, *Sucos* and *Knuas"* have been changed to Indonesian ones: "*Kabupaten, Kecamatan, Desa* and *Rts*". Therefore, there is no need for the Indonesians to claim that they created the administrative structures!

For almost twenty years, the Indonesians have been claiming that they have done a lot in East Timor, compared to the Portuguese. I have heard the one about the university staff before. However, what Michel does not appear to know is that only 17 out of the 76 University staff in East Timor are East Timorese. If the invasion had not taken place and the Indonesian occupation had not been imposed, by this time, in an independent East Timor, all 76 staff would have been East Timorese.

The numbers of students graduating from school would be far higher than those mentioned in your statistics for 1994 because some 15,000 to 20,000 students were enrolled at secondary schools in 1974, all over East Timor. The number of Catholic priests would also have been higher if the invasion had not taken place and the only prestigious Seminary, that of **Our Lady of Fátima**, in Dare-Dili, would not have been burned down by the bombs dropped by the

Indonesians. Young men and women students along with Seminarians who believed in Suharto's so-called Amnesty Appeal of 1977 and who surrendered or captured were brutally massacred during 1977-1979, in the Annihilation Circle. During the Annihilation Circle, the Indonesian military advanced on areas held by FRETILIN with the help of heavy bombardment from the sea and air. This action was aimed at liquidating the Resistance Movement and its supporters. Most of the civilian population were killed up in the mountains. I was up on the Matebian Mountain from 1975 until March 1979. I can testify that many of my relatives were killed there.

The number of East Timorese graduate students and doctors are actually now a hundred times higher than the numbers mentioned by Thomas Michel if you count those who have been driven into exile. Those who are now at the universities in East Timor and throughout Indonesia are those who survived the war. Most of them were as young as 10 or even younger in the years after the invasion. Using these statistics to justify the case for 'integration' is tantamount to condoning gross crimes perpetrated by the Indonesia military in the territory. Underpinning an argument with statistics like these to legitimise the occupation and blame the victims is nothing short of an insult to us East Timorese. Writing an article to satisfy the organisers of a trip to East Timor and overlooking the realities on the ground, denying that people are suffering, is damaging not only to Thomas Michel's reputation but, if I may say so, to the Catholic Church as well.

The main purpose of the scholarships given to the young East Timorese was to win over the 'natives' hearts and minds and strengthen the Indonesian hold on the territory. It was to show to East Timorese that the Indonesian government can do better than the Portuguese in less than two decades. But what the Indonesians have forgotten is that the struggle for independence is the main East Timorese aspiration.

In fact, the Indonesians have done more damage in less than two decades than the Portuguese over a period of four hundred years. They have imposed a regime of fear. The details of human rights violations are well documented. These range from corruption, harassment, arbitrary arrests, imprisonment, death squads and mass killings. In this sense, the Indonesian military in East Timor have beaten the record. How many more people need to be killed before Church leaders through-out the world join the Catholic Church in East Timor to voice their concern about these crimes against humanity?

In his article, Michel also implies that the Indonesian government is generous in its funding of development programmes in East Timor. He says that: "less than 5% of [the] operating budget comes from the region itself". However, he fails to point out that the economy of East Timor has been ravaged by the war. Moreover, trade and commercial activities are now in the hands of the military or of Suharto's cronies. Also, in many parts of the country, the land is not being cultivated because the military cannot get access as FALINTIL is in control. The agricultural areas which are under Indonesian control have been seized by Suharto's family and his cronies. I shall just mention a couple of examples: PT Denok is a company which belongs to a General and PT Kerta Niaga belongs to Suharto's wife.

The East Timorese do not need to thank the Indonesians for these 'developments'. They would prefer to be in a position to develop East Timor for themselves. Finally, a point about the roads

that have been built by the Indonesians. These were built primarily for use during military manoeuvres and to satisfy those countries who are anxious to see Indonesia recognised as the legitimate ruler of East Timor. East Timorese will not be satisfied unless the Indonesian troops withdraw from East Timor and peace has been established in the territory. Material development will not win over hearts and mind, especially after so many lives have been lost as a result of the brutal imposition of Indonesian rule in East Timor.

MICHEL'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN EAST TIMOR

Thomas Michel recycles a well known fact in this section of his article. He says that: "the Catholic Church in East Timor has grown more quickly than anywhere else in the world". There are two main reasons for this. One is that the Church in East Timor is outspoken about the war crimes perpetrated by the Indonesian troops. It has, over the last 19 years, been the guardian of the East Timorese population. Most importantly, many members of the Catholic Church in East Timor have faithfully observed Christian principles throughout these nightmare years. Thank God for the bravery of the Catholic Church leaders who have lived through the dangers with their followers and who have provided them with support at times when it was needed.

The second reason for the growth of the importance of the Church in East Timor, which Michel does , in fact, allude to is that the Indonesians have denied the East Timorese the right to practise their own Animist religion and have obliged them to adopt a religion approved by Indonesian law. The East Timorese have had no problem choosing Catholicism as they know the work of the Church and know that many priests have taken a courageous stand over these difficult years. The church has borne witness and has shown determination in fighting on behalf of East Timorese. They have even succeeded in putting some pressure on the military regime. The Catholic Church leaders are to be commended for their courage, for their caring and for their involvement in the struggle against the occupation shoulder to shoulder with the people of East Timor.

It is also important to note here that people in every part of the Catholic church in East Timor face continuous harassment by the Indonesian military. These people include East Timorese and Western priests, sisters, brothers and catechists who dare to criticise the Indonesian regime[4]. The military regime never leaves them alone.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES

Thomas Michel slips in a positive point about the clergy, sisters and catechists, who receive money from the Indonesian government for teaching in local schools. However, one thing that he fails to mention is that this money has strings attached to it. If they are employed as civil servants, they have to observe the Indonesian Constitution and the rituals associated with it. This means that they have to go marching up and down the country and they have to perform

[4] I am referring here in particular to Fr, Locatteli in Baucau, Fr Walter in Lospalos, Fr Domingos Soares in Baucau airport, Hilário Madeira in Baucau etc. They were beaten up in 1980s not for criticising the military but on some small and petty pretext , for example, because they did not give a lift to Indonesian troops or because they did not stop their cars in the required place. I am also referring to the planned acts of symbolic violence against the church. The well planned and executed act of desecration in Remexio in 1994, where two Muslims soldiers went into the church, threw the Host on the floor and jumped on it. There has also been harassment of sisters who have been asked why did not want to marry and so on.

all sorts of activities that are inconsistent with the teachings of their religion. For example, a teacher of religion has to join other staff in participating in the *Gerek Jalan* (a kind of military parade). Providing state funds for Catholic schools and universities provides a way of keeping these people from speaking out against the military regime.

There are still those who do courageously dare to speak out. Take, for example, Catholic intellectuals like George Aditjondro and his two colleagues, all Indonesian citizens from Salatiga University. These academics and their families are constantly being harassed and being threatened with dismissal from their jobs. Aditjondro has received summons from the Indonesian police. Once he had to leave a meeting on East Timor in Portugal and went back to Jakarta because his wife was being harassed by the Intelligence Service. His house was stoned at night.

The worst distortions in Thomas Michel's article are those where he misrepresents the words of Bishop Belo. How could anyone misrepresent the words and deeds of this most respected of church leaders? The distortion is all the more shocking because it comes from a member of the Catholic clergy! There are two points in Michel's article where the words of the Bishop are distorted. The first is the following: Bishop Belo asked the youth in his diocese "not to be taken in by the provocation of irresponsible persons who do not want East Timorese to live in security and peace". On this occasion, he was referring to the Indonesian provocateurs. He made this public statement in response to the increasing anger expressed by the East Timorese in his diocese about the activities of death squads funded by the Indonesian Intelligence and trained by the military in West Timor in order to harass people at night and to kidnap and kill those suspected of having anti-Indonesian sentiments.

The second point in Michel's article where Bishop Ximenes Belo's words are distorted is the following: The Bishop wrote a letter to the Secretary General of the UN in 1989. In that letter, he called for a Referendum on the question of East Timor so that the people themselves could decide their own future under the supervision of the UN. He also stated that the East Timorese have never asked for integration and it is always Indonesia that speaks on behalf of the East Timorese. When Bishop Ximenes Belo wrote this letter to the UN, the Indonesian government and its military commanders criticised him severely, in the Catholic press and in the ordinary press. There were even some press attempts at character assassination. Bishop Belo's public stand is still that he favours a referendum. He says he is not opposed to 'integration' but he would prefer to let the people of East Timor decide for themselves. Michel's claim that Bishop Ximenes Belo "has stated publicly that he is personally in favour of integration" is the most outrageous distortion ever made by a commentator on East Timor's politics. It is shameful that this should come from the pen of a prominent Jesuit. Despite attempts like these to undermine the work of Bishop Ximenes Belo, and despite threats to his personal safety, he is still alive and is a model of Catholic leadership in East Timor. Thank God that the Catholic Church has always stood its ground and thank God that the East Timorese clergy have never acted as "yes men", unlike most of their Indonesian counterparts.

My next point touches on what Thomas Michel has to say about the relationship between people with different religious beliefs. The East Timorese have never shown hatred of people with any other religion. If there was any situation that is "about to explode", as Michel puts it, then it was because of provocation by Indonesian troops.

The person that Thomas Michel quotes as his source on this issue is Yose Nolasco Monteiro, a Goan priest based in East Timor. I should perhaps inform Michel that Monteiro has quite a reputation in East Timor. In 1975, when the Indonesian aeroplanes were dropping paratroops, Monteiro told people who took refugee in Motael Church not to worry because the paratroopers were "Angels coming from Heaven to rescue them from Communists". The Portuguese Bishop said the same thing from his residence in Leci-Dere in Dili. However, the Portuguese Bishop later recognised that he was wrong after witnessing these 'Angels' killing civilians indiscriminately on the streets of Dili. Father Monteiro never disassociated himself from his words even after seeing all those atrocities.

There is another story about Monteiro which I will share with Michel. In a visit, paid by Monteiro to the East Timorese Community in Balteiros-Portugal in early 1980s, he was surrounded by East Timorese in exile who asked him anxious questions about the impact of the famine and diseases at home. Father Monteiro responded that there was no reason to believe the reports about people dying. He said "Look at me. See how healthy I am. There is no famine nor disease. People are better off now". This reply greatly angered Bishop Martinho Lopes, Bishop Belo's predecessor. On Monteiro's return to Dili, he went to pay a visit to the Bishop. To his surprise, D. Martinho asked him why he had come all the way back to Timor and enquired as to whether he had a small piece of land in Goa where he could go and settle. Father Monteiro is still in East Timor. His continued presence in East Timor is <u>not</u> seen by East Timorese as a commitment to the well being of the Maubere people.

INDONESIAN IMMIGRATION INTO EAST TIMOR

Thomas Michel does appear to see the long term problems being created by Indonesian immigration into East Timor. Indonesian immigrants[5] arrive daily and take up the jobs in East Timor. The East Timorese understand the significance of their presence there. We know now that the immigration programme is part of a deliberate policy of demographic change being carried out by the Indonesian government.

The so-called transmigration programme was not invented for the sake of the Indonesian ordinary citizen. It was well planned and executed to serve dominant group interests and to foster 'national unity'. The long term purpose is to dilute and eventually wipe out East Timorese culture. This is not the end of the story. This programme is also designed to fill the gap in the population. (Up to 1975 there were almost 700,000 East Timorese). But after the so-called transmigration programme, when thousands were sent to East Timor, the Indonesian census in East Timor in 1980 registered a population of over 600,000. The Indonesians see this as a long term strategy that will eventually pay off for them politically. So, for example, if they are forced to carry out a referendum in East Timor as demanded by the East Timorese National Resistance the electorate needs to have changed substantially.

Once the so-called transmigrants have arrived in East Timor, the Indonesian government has to provide some way or another of giving them jobs. These are often jobs that should go to

[5] As I do not recognise the Indonesian sovereignty any Indonesian moving to East Timor under the Indonesian government's so-called transmigration programme, I see as immigrants. Transmigrants as a generic term refers to people who move from one part to another within their own country. In the case of East Timor, they [are] moving into a foreign territory. Therefore, they are immigrants according to international law.

East Timorese people. There are two benefits that the Indonesian government derives from the so-called transmigration programme: one is that by giving jobs to Indonesian citizens in East Timor, they can keep them under control and the Resistance cannot influence them and turn them against the regime. They are also useful as informers, campaigners and above all as spies who keep their eyes on the activities of East Timorese. The second benefit is that the money paid to the Indonesians finds its way back to Indonesia, as they are encouraged to transfer their money to the place of origin. At the end of the day, the losers are the East Timorese as money goes out of East Timor.

In his article, Thomas Michel gets in a bit of a muddle over dates and events. November 12 seems to be his favourite date to describe different actions taken by the East Timorese. He mentions an incident where a trader from Sulawesi murdered an East Timorese in a dispute about employment. He makes a point of noting the date: November 12. But November 12 is the date when all East Timorese commemorate an event which was primarily political in nature: a demonstration which took place at Santa Cruz cemetery in November 1991 and which ended in a bloody massacre by Indonesian troops. The protesters were calling on the Indonesian occupying army to withdraw immediately. The aim was to commemorate the murder of Sebastião Gomes by the Indonesian Secret Service in Motael Church in Dili. The commemoration was held a fortnight after his death. There have been many other actions but they were taken on different days and months. There will be many others in the years to come.

In the demonstration on November 12, 1991, the young East Timorese who took part were protesting against the Indonesian occupation. They were frustrated at the postponement of a visit by Portuguese Parliamentarians[6]. The military are determined to kill anyone who opposed their will in this way. As a result of this protest more than 200 youths were gunned down. This was a well-planned and well-executed action by Indonesian troops. Theo Syafei, the Indonesian General in East Timor said after the Santa Cruz massacre: "We are determined to shoot them [the East Timorese] and we will shoot them if they don't accept integration". However, this time, the military could not get away with their usual acts of violence. This massacre was filmed and broadcast live world-wide on different television networks. The journalist who filmed it was detained for eight hours in a police station in Dili and some of his films were confiscated and destroyed in front of him.

DISPARAGING REMARKS ABOUT OUR NATIONAL LANGUAGE

In this part of my response to Michel's article, I will take up his points about our national language. He says: "it is far from being developed into a full-scale national language". A statement like this reveals more about his ignorance than about our cultural heritage. There is a fully standardised form of Tetum but we have never had the opportunity to employ it in the public arena. We have always had to use a coloniser's language in education, in the media and in all domains of public life. How can Tetum develop into a full-scale national language if the Indonesian regime is imposing Bahasa Indonesia in all public institutions?

---

[6] The Portuguese Parliamentarians' visit was postponed because Suharto's government objected to a journalist chosen by the Portuguese government. The Suharto regime broke the agreement made at the UN in which it was stated that both the Indonesian and Portuguese governments were free to choose 6 international journalists each to accompany their parliamentarians. But at the last minute, Suharto showed his true colour as a dictator by imposing his laws on Portuguese parliamentarians.

Tetum has been well established as a lingua franca for centuries and the use of Tetum in the Catholic Church was standard practice even before Indonesia got their independence and were still using Dutch in public institutions. Bahasa Indonesia would never have become a full-scale national language if it had not been adopted as a symbol of national unity when the Indonesians got their independence in the 1940s.

I would like to add here one other important point about the use of Tetum: the use of Tetum in the Catholic liturgy and catechetic has been recognised by the Vatican Holy See to draw attention to the fact that the Catholic Church in East Timor does not constitute a part of the Indonesian Conference of Bishops.

One last comment on Michel's claims about our language: the use of the Indonesian language in young people's protests does not mean that Bahasa Indonesia is the only medium of communication. It is used because the protests are targeted at the Indonesians. Because of the typical ignorance of the occupying forces, and their inability to learn other languages, the East Timorese are obliged to use the language of the enemy to get their points across. Increasingly, those of us who are in the Resistance find that we also have to use English in our struggle against the occupation. Ali Alatas also uses English when addressing foreign journalists and when he criticises people for interfering in the 'internal affairs' of Indonesia.

MICHEL'S PROPOSALS ABOUT 'RECONCILIATION'

I turn now to Michel's points about 'reconciliation'. His interest in this issue was no doubt behind his invitation to visit East Timor as a guest of the Indonesian government.

The need for reconciliation is a new concept for the Indonesian authorities and those who have been ill-fated enough to support Indonesia. However, for the East Timorese in the Resistance, this is not a new concept. I need to draw Michel's attention to the fact that FRETILIN has always been the main party interested in solving the conflict once and for all. In 1981, it was FRETILIN that proposed a Peace Plan to the Indonesian regime. The proposal led to an agreement signed in March 1983 by Xanana Gusmão and Colonel Purwanto, the Supreme Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces stationed in East Timor. They also agreed upon a cease-fire but this was broken by the Indonesian forces five months later. Again, in early 1990, the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) proposed various steps that could be followed in seeking a international solution to the problem.

In 1993, Konis Santana, now the FALINTIL commander, appealed for a cease fire to pave the way for the talks between the Portuguese and Indonesian governments, with the participation of all the parties in conflict. However, the Indonesian authorities responded to all these initiatives in their usual heavy handed manner calling for the surrender of FALINTIL forces and an end to the struggle. Despite the obdurate attitude of the Indonesian troops, these olive branches are still on the table waiting to be picked up by the Suharto regime. All anti-invasion parties are still keen to solve the conflict in East Timor once for all but it seems that it is the Indonesian regime that is trying to boycott talks and hold everything up. This attitude was reflected in the words of some pro-integration participants in the 'intra-Timorese' talks organised by the UN, under the auspices of the Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali. However, we must all bear in mind the terms of UN General Assembly Resolution 30/37,

1982 which stated that for the solution of the conflict "all parties directly concerned" has to be consulted to achieve "a comprehensive settlement of the problem" of the territory.

We, the East Timorese who are actively involved in the Resistance, know full well that the 'silent majority' want East Timor to be independent. The Indonesians always claim that it is not true. They claim that the case was finished off with the 'Balibohong' declaration in November 1975. There has never been a referendum or an election in East Timor. The only election that took place was in early 1975 in the Lospalos region. This was to elect the local representatives. The vast majority of the electorate voted for FRETILIN and only a handful for APODETI. We therefore insist on the need for a referendum. This would settle the ongoing debate and test the Indonesian claim. But the Indonesian regime is wary of this option because they know it will prove how wrong they have been all along. Unfortunately, the Indonesian claim about the 'silent majority' is echoed in all too familiar discourse in Michel's article. He says: "the silent majority... appears to be ideologically indifferent".

WITHDRAWAL WITH DIGNITY

It would therefore be best to let the Indonesian authorities accept the peace proposals that are on the table and cooperate with the UN in good faith, so that the problems in East Timor can be solved once and for all. We know that the Indonesian authorities are desperate to save face. That is why we are trying to help them. The best way of saving face would be by negotiating a withdrawal from the territory. Successive governments in Portugal have always stated that the Portuguese will do whatever they can to build up an independent East Timor. Moreover, East Timor will be in a strong position to attract foreign investment in the country.

Human right groups all over the world have always concentrated on the violations of civil rights. The political questions are matters for governments and the legitimate representatives of the people. After almost twenty years of illegal occupation, the Indonesian authorities have still not realised that their attempts to achieve the "integration of hearts and minds" of East Timorese people is a lost cause.

When the East Timorese get a chance to speak out, they call for the Indonesians to pull out immediately from their land and point out that they want to live peacefully in their own home environment under the leadership of a properly elected President of an East Timorese Republic. We do not have sufficient military power to win the war, but we are able to go on being "the pebble under the Indonesian shoes" as Ali Alatas puts it. At last, there is now some evidence that some allies with Indonesia are beginning to recognise that this pebble is turning into rock. It is therefore in the interests of the Indonesian government to remove the boot altogether.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Paz é Possível em Timor Leste (1985) Timor-Leste: 1974-1984. Lisboa-Portugal

Aarons, M. and Domm, R. (1992) East Timor: A Western Made Tragedy The Left Book Club: Sydney, Australia

Barbedo de Magalhães, A. (1992) East Timor: Indonesian Occupation and Genocide. Porto University Press: Porto

_____ (1992) East Timor: Land of Hope. Porto University Press: Porto

Budiardjo, C. & Liong, L. S. (1984) The War Against East Timor. Zed Books: United Kingdom

Chomsky, N. (1992) Deterring Democracy. Vintage, Cox & Wyman Ltd, Reading: Great Britain

CIIR, (1992) Comment-East Timor: an International Responsibility. Russell Press Ltd, Nottingham

CIIR/IPJET (1995) International Law and the Question of East Timor. Russell Press Ltd, Nottingham

Comité Central da FRETILIN (1974) Programa Politico da FRETILIN. Edição da Casa dos Timores, Lisboa-Portugal

Comité 28 de Novembro (eds) (1978) A Nossa Vitória é Apenas uma Questão de Tempo. Lisboa

European Christian Consultation on East Timor (1990) "I am Timorese": Testimonies from East Timor. CIIR, London

FITUN Bulletin No 5 November (1991); No 6 January (1992); No 8 June (1992); No 9 February (1993) Praxis-London

FRETILIN External Delegation (1985) Ten Years of Struggle Against the Indonesian Expansionism. Maputo, Mozambique

Gusmão, X. (1994) Timor Leste: Um Povo, Uma Pátria. Edições Colibri, Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa-Portugal

Herman, E. S. & Chomsky, N. (1994) Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media. Vintage, London

Kohen, A. and Taylor (1979) An Act of Genocide: Indonesia's Invasion of East Timor. Calvert's North Star Press Ltd, London

McMillan, A. (1992) Death in Dili. Sceptre Books, Hodder and Stoughton, Victoria: Australia

Lima, M. F. (1992) Obligations of Portugal as Administering Power of Non-Autonomous Territory of East Timor. Assembleia da República Portuguesa, Lisboa - Portugal

Pires, L. M., (1991) Descolonização de Timor: Missão Impossível? Publicações Dom Quixote, Lda: Lisboa, Portugal

Said, E. W. (1993) Culture and Imperialism. Chatto & Windus Ltd. Reading, England

Sword, K. and Walsh, P. (1991) 'Opening Up': Travellers' Impression of East Timor 1989-1991. Australian East Timor Association

Taylor, G. J. (1990) The Indonesian Occupation of East Timor 1974-1989: A Chronology. CIIR: London & Refugee Studies Programme: University of Oxford

Taylor, G. J. (1991) Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor. Zed Books & Pluto Press: London

Taylor, P. M. (1992) War and Media: Propaganda and Persuasion in the Gulf War. Manchester University Press, Manchester

Turner, M. (1992) Telling, East Timor: Personal Testimonies 1942-1992. Alken Press, Smithfield: NSW, Australia

Yearbook of the United Nations, (1966). Office of Public Information, United Nations: New York

Yearbook of the United Nations, Vol. 29, 1975. Office of Public Information, United Nations: New York

FURTHER READING

Amnesty International (Report), 1, Easton Street, WC1 X 8DJ London - England

A Paz é Possível em Timor Leste (Bulletin) Rua Campolide 215-4D, 1070 Lisboa-Portugal

Bizot, J. (1989) The Forgotten Cause: East Timor's Right to Self-Determination. House of Common London

Budiardjo, C. & Liong, L. S. (1984) West Papua: The Obliteration of a People. Tapol, Surrey: United Kingdom

Boxer, C. R. (1969) The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825. Hutchinson: London

Chomsky, N. and Herman, E. S. (1979) The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism. South End Press, Boston

Chomsky, N. (1985) Turning the Tide: US Intervention in Central America and the Struggle for Peace. South End Press, Boston, Massachusetts

Comité Central da FRETILIN (1974) Manual Politico da FRETILIN. Dili, East Timor

Dunn, J. (1984) A People Betrayed. Jacaranda Press, Brisbane Australia

FITUN Bulletin (An Occasional Publication) Pott Street, London E2 0EF, England

Federer, J. (October 1994) The Catholic Church in East Timor: Its lone Struggle for Justice. Unpublished paper

Hill, M. H. (1978) FRETILIN: The Origins, Ideologies and Strategies of a Nationalist Movement in East Timor. Thesis for Politics Department, Monash University: Australia

Horta, J. R. (1987) Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor. The Red Sea Press, Inc.: New Jersey

Informação, (Bulletin) Comissão dos Direitos do Povo Maubere, Rua Pinheiro Chagas, 77-2o Esq 1050 Lisboa- Portugal

Jolliffe, J. (1978) East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism. St Lucia, Australia, University of Queensland Press

Maubere (Newsletter) 210, Le Fanu Road, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10 - Republic of Ireland

Moynihan, D. P. and Weaver, S. (1978) A Dangerous Place. Secker & Warburg, London

Nicol, B. (1978) Timor, the Stillborn Nation. Widescope International, Melbourne, Australia

Lawson, I. (1989) East Timor: Roots Continue to Grow. (MA) Thesis for the University of Amsterdam, Anthropological-Sociological Institute

Legge, J. D. (1964) Indonesia. Prentice-Hall, Inc. Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey

Palmer, L. (1973) Communists in Indonesia: Power Pursued in Vain. Anchor Books, Garden City: New York

Osborne, M. (1979) SouthEast Asia: An Introductory History. George Allen & Unwin, PTY Ltd, Australia

Relatório do Concelho Central da Delegação Externa da FRETILIN à Plenária (April 1994) Areia Branca-Lourinhã, Portugal

Retboll, T. (1984) East Timor: The Struggle Continues. IWGIA, Document 50, Copenhagen: Denmark.

Smythe, P. A. (1995) The Crucifixion of East Timor. MA Dissertation, University of Leeds, England

Tapol bulletin, The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign, 111, Northwood Road, Surrey CR7 8HW London - England

Timor Link, (Buleetin) CIIR, 190a New Road, N1 Londond-England

Williams, L. E. (1976) SouthEast Asia - A History. Oxford University Press, New York